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JOAN of ARC
MONOLOGUE

FLORENCE I. GETTNER

PITTSBURGH
PENNSYLVANIA



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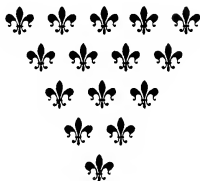
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BY
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JOAN of ARC.

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It was night in the city of Rouen; the moon shone down in silent majesty upon the sleeping city. It shone into the council chamber of the archbishop's palace where Warwick and Couchon had just signed the edict for the burning of the young maid, Joan of Arc. It shone into the ball room of the Burgundian palace where fair women and gallant knights were staking jewels, gloves and bon bons upon the fate of her whom they jeeringly called "The Maid of God" It shone into a lonely prison cell where a young girl lay sleeping, in her innocent dreaming, forgetting the placard above the iron door of her cell—"Joan of Arc, the Maid of God"

Is it the moonlight's deceptive gleam
That shines on that child-like face?
Ah, no! She smiles in a happy dream
Of a mother's fond embrace,
Of the days when she tended her
gentle sheep
On the hillsides wild and free,
And wandered at will, through the
forests deep
To the shade of the "Fairies' Tree."
To the "Fairies' Tree" where the
Voices abode,
And beckoned and called her name,
And spoke of the soldiers, whose
blood had flowed
To lift France from her grave of shame.
Where St. Michael first lifted his
fiery sword,
And his Voice spoke strong and clear:
"Draw near, Oh Maid, and hear the
word
Of God; be strong nor fear.
Joan, Joan of Arc; God's messenger
thou art.
Prince Charles, the Dauphin, the
rightful heir

Trembling, nigh conquered, he's
at Rheims; depart
By might of God and sword, his
kingship thou declare."

"Oh, Holy Voice, I'm but a Maid,
Don Remy's shepherdess,
I dare not go, I am afraid.
Oh, pity my distress."

"Joan, Joan of Arc, thy commission is
of God; nor fear
St. Catherine and St. Margaret, these two
shall be thy aid.
Ride, ride to M. de Bandicourt,
captain at Vancouleurs,
He'll conduct thee to the king and
say: "Here is the Maid!"

* * * * *

Now in the face of the sleeping girl
The moonlight reveals a change.
She dreams of the court and its
merry whirl
To the shepherdess maid, so strange.
Of the doubt in the face of the
courtiers there
As Bandicourt spoke with the king,
How her simple beauty won smile

or stare
As she told how the Voices would
ring.
And how the king, convinced, at
last,
Had lifted her from her knees, and then
Her lonely heart, beat doubly fast
When he promised her horses
and men!
When he gave her a suit of armour
to wear
And a pure white steed to ride,
Then he spoke to her soldiers; "To
God's Maid so fair
Swear allegiance! By her word
abide,
For she is the deliverer of our poor
France;
Appointed by God on high,
Taught by Voices to retreat or advance."
And their loud cheers rent the
sky.
And they loved her, these soldiers
So coarse and grim,
With a love, pure, holy and sweet,
And they'd follow her gladly till

eyes were dim
With sleep, and aching their
feet.

* * * * *

At last, one night in camp, as
she prayed
A great light shone far and near.
'Twas St. Michael who said, "Be not
dismayed
The day of battle is here!
Advance, in the name of Jehovah,
advance
To the city of Orleans, and there
Surrounded by English, the bravest
of France
Lie besieged; for thy safety have no
care,
Thy time is not yet." And all
thought of fear
As by magic, left the Maid,
And her soul was filled with
heavenly zeal
As she turned to the soldiers and
said:
"On, on for God, the king and France!
On, on my bravest of the brave,

To besieged Orleans, with sword
and lance,
Follow to Victory or the grave."
An angel she seemed to her
men at arms;
One who would never tire,
She rode like a goddess through
battles' harms,
And her courage set hearts
on fire. (*Music—The "Marseille"*)
And when to Orleans they came at
last,
Like a fury she fought and fought
One bastille, then another, in confusion
she cast.
Not a troop could rally from her
onslaught.
In the thick of the battle where
arrows flew fastest
Rode the Maid of God, to encourage
or entreat.
They fought as inspired to follow
her crest,
Until the English dismayed,
sounded—"Retreat."
Then into the city—the free city—

she rode,
And the poor besieged people
 hung on each smile and glance
And cried, "Hurrah! Hurrah! the
 Maid of God!
On, on to Rheims! We'll crown
 Charles, King of France!" (*Music ceases*)

* * * * *

A moment and the Maid more
 peaceful seems,
A sweet, serious smile is on her
 face.
Again of king and court she dreams,
Of her triumphant entry into the place.
How, after the Coronation, she saluted
 her King,
And kissing his robe said: "It is done!
My task is completed—God has made
 thee a king!
For thee 'tis to finish the work I've
 begun."
When out spoke the King, "My brave
 captain, not so,
France would be England's vassal
 were it not for thee.
To the city of Compeigne I bid thee go,

The city of all France dearest to me,
Warwick, my enemy, has here his
stronghold.

You and your picked soldiers, a
god fearing band,
You alone can conquer him, Warwick
the bold!"

"My King I am your subject; 'tis yours
to command.

I have but followed my Voices; all to them
you owe.

Now St. Michael is silent. 'Tis St.
Margaret who speaks,

She whispers of loved ones at home, to
them I must go.

Dismiss me, Oh King, for I'm but a
Maid.

I did not conquer Orleans; the Voices,
'twere they.

They have deserted me. Oh, I'm strangely
afraid.

They point to Don Remy, I dare not
disobey."

So between conscience and King a
fierce battle she fought,

Dimly conscious of grim disaster ahead.

Until the traitor Couchon, on her
patriotism wrought,
And the troops marched to Compeigne
by Joan of Arc led.
All through the march Couchon
rode by her side,
Couchon the deposed captain, who
hated the Maid.
His treacherous heart was light all
through the ride,
For he had sold out to the English
and was not afraid.
And Joan was filled with a nameless
fright.
The Voices were silent; though she
fervently prayed,
Until St. Michael appeared on the
very last night.
"Joan, Joan of Arc, thou hast my
Voice disobeyed.
The offence is thine. Thou alone
must pay,
To the French great Victory shall be
given,
But thou to the English, Couchon
will betray."

And meekly bowed Joan to the
will of heaven.
Bravely she fought through the
long dreadful day,
The English fought fiercely; the
arrows flew fast,
Until Joan, always in the thick of
the fray
Swaying blindly, fell wounded
from her horse at last.
And when consciousness came to
the Maid again,
Her soul woke to joy; the French had
forced the gate.
The English were fleeing, both horses
and men,
And she staggered for safety ere it
would be too late.
But her wound was so great, she
could not move from the place.
She wavered feebly and was caught
by some fleeing one's arm.
One look was enough—that was
an English face,
She was a prisoner. Oh, God! would no
one raise the alarm?

A brutal laugh answered the moan
breathed so low,
The triumphant shout of the English,
the last thing she knew.
Then followed weeks in prison. Did
no one know
Of the prisoner there midst that motley
crew?
The Voices, where were they? The King,
where was he?
He didn't know; he surely could not
know,
He would send all the soldiers of
France to set her free!
And her heart with courage and hope
began to glow.

* * * * *

The moon shining in through
the bars of the place,
Over the head of the Maid formed
a halo of light.
It cast a soft radiance on her
agonized face
As she dreams of the trial; how for
many a night
They tried to confuse the poor tortured

brain

And make her admit that her Voices
had lied.

How her answers confused them
again and again,

A sweet reason she had for each
question they plied,

Until out spoke one of that traitorous
band,

Ah, yes! 'twas Couchon, whom she had
trusted so well.

"She did follow the Voices; this
you must understand.

But were they from Heaven? No, from
the depths of Hell!

A strange, mystic power, she
weilds over men,

A wiley sorceress she, in grim
Satan's hire.

Joan dead, the English will conquer,
not till then.

Cleanse the world of this witch! Cleanse
it by fire!"

A few moments they wrangled, and
then it was done.

The Edict went forth. The World's

great mistake!

Tomorrow morn, at rise of the sun,
Joan, the witch, shall be burned
at the stake."

* * * * *

And now the door of her cell is
thrown wide,

A group of malicious faces look into
the place.

A grim brutal soldier comes to her
side,

And waking her roughly, laughs in
her face.

She rises painfully bewildered to her
feet,

What can this mean? Oh, she knows
at last!

The King has sent soldiers. Liberty
will be sweet!

How she will thank him! She'll
ride sure and fast

To tell him how she knew help
would come.

Yet, the faces are dreadful, not pleasant
to see.

One look freezes her senses, makes

every limb numb.
What is it they say? "Free, yes, my
beauty, you'll be free!"
Then she hears the edict.— A gasp,
a moan, and then
In rigid silence stands, not a move
does she make.
She waits until the cell is cleared
of the men,
Then sinks to her knees. "Oh, God!
to be burned at the stake!
Oh, it is cruel, horrible! It is not my
fate!
St. Michael, St. Catherine, St. Margaret
come to me now.
Oh, send soldiers or death ere it is
too late!
What harm have I done, that King
Charles should allow
This terrible crime? Oh, this is a horrible,
horrible dream,
I'll waken soon, at home in my bed,
And God's free sunshine will bathe me
in its gleams,
And my sheep will be bleating, impatient
to be fed.

Yet, these chains, those bars! Oh, God
it is true!
Still it was the Voice; it did come to
inspire.
I did disobey. Oh, Holy Voice, if my
hours are few,
Send any death but the fire—not the
fire!
Oh, they'll lead me forth bound, like
a devil sent witch,
And the mad mob will hiss and they'll
fight and they'll sneer;
How they'll laugh with delight when
my poor tortured limbs twitch,
As the red flame comes creeping, comes
creeping so near!
Oh, God in Heaven, look down in thy
love,
My sin has been great, but I'm only
a Maid.
Send help, if not from France, from
St. Michael above.
I'm so young to die—Oh, God, I'm afraid!
(*Music—*)
What's this? A melody divine, sweet
and low,

Comes creeping into my heart, bringing
peace.
'Tis St. Margaret; at last I see, I know
This is my Deliverance! 'Twill be sweet
release,
My Voices, I hear; they are with
me now,
They soothe my frightened spirit in
peace to lie.
To the will of Jehovah, I meekly
will bow,
A martyr to France—I am ready to die."
(*Music ceases.*)

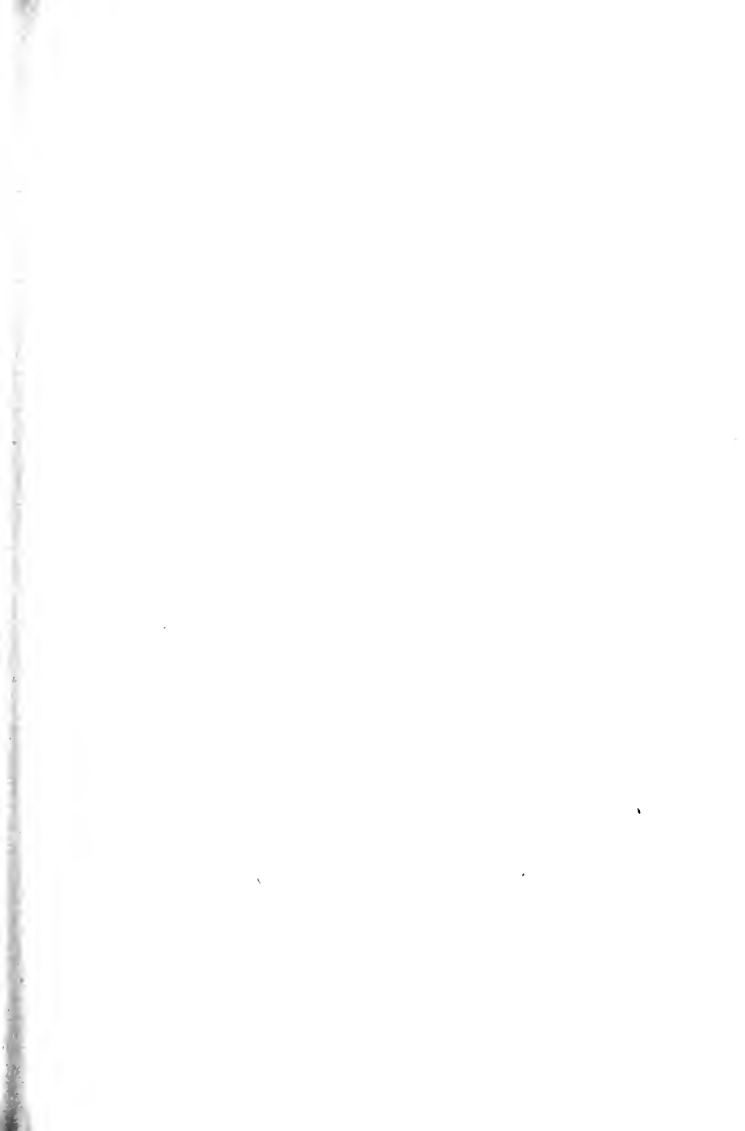
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And when next morning, to the cell
soldiers came,
They fell back in confusion, inspired
with awe;
For willingly, smilingly, exultingly
she came.
Little they knew of the angels she saw,
And the Voices she heard as she was
led through the street.
And even the mad mob stood abashed
and awed,
As they gazed on her face, so peaceful

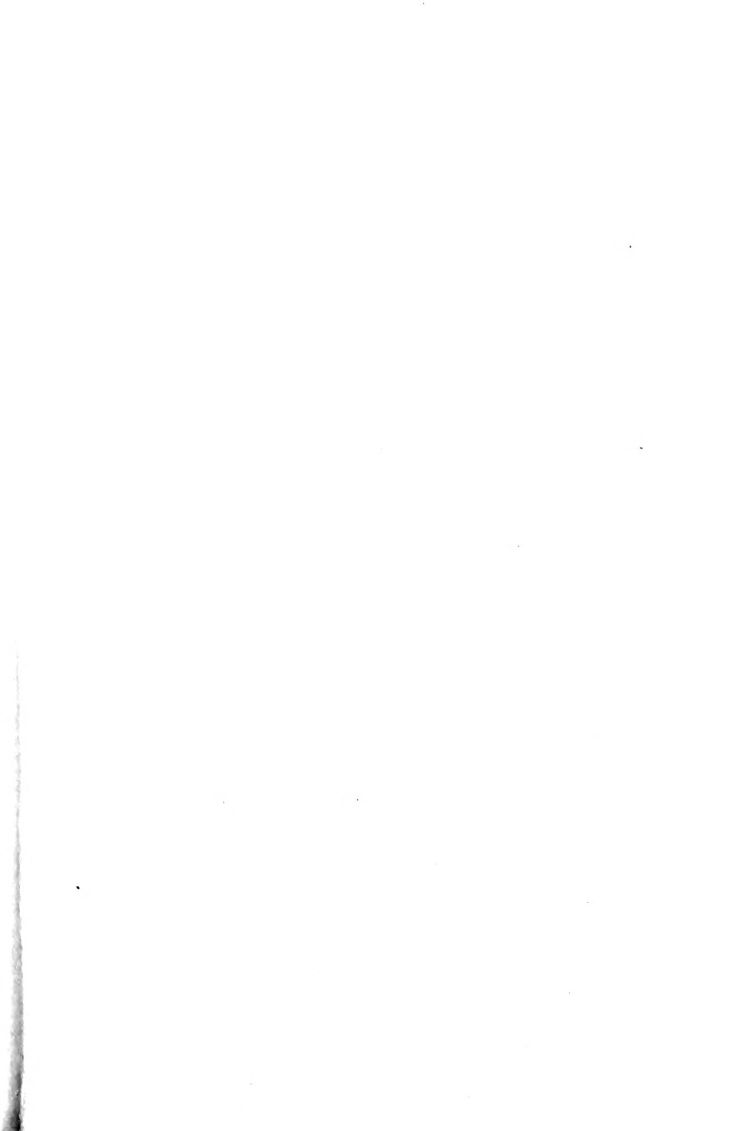
and sweet,
And murmured: "'Tis true, she was
sent from God."
And even at the end, her face did
not blanch;
Those who came to scoff, returned
to laud.
Unafraid, alone, this martyr of France,
Sent her pure virgin soul to meet
its God.



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